

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-20. (canceled)

21. (new): A method for preventing and treating plant diseases caused by a bacterial pathogen, which method comprises functional inactivation of a gene identified as *XC1950* encoding a phosphoenolpyruvate synthase protein in said bacterial pathogen.

22. (new): The method of claim 21, wherein said bacterial pathogen is *Xanthomonas campestris*.

23. (new): The method of claim 21, wherein said *XC1950* gene has one of the following sequences:

- (a) the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, or
- (b) a DNA sequence having greater than 80% homology with SEQ ID NO: 1.

24. (new): The method of claim 21, wherein said functional inactivation comprises deletion or mutation of the *XC1950* gene.

25. (new): The method of claim 24, wherein said functional inactivation occurs at the level of transcription and/or translation of the *XC1950* gene.

26. (new): The method of claim 21, wherein said functional inactivation comprises inhibition of the phosphoenolpyruvate synthase protein encoded by the *XC1950* gene.